

EXCHANGE OF LANDS IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

JANUARY 28, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. VAILE, from the Committee on the Public Lands, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 11952]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred H. R. 11952, "A bill to authorize the exchange of certain patented lands in the Rocky Mountain National Park for Government lands in the park," having had the same under consideration, reports it to the House herewith, with the recommendation that it do pass.

This bill was introduced by the chairman of the Committee on the Public Lands at the request of the Secretary of the Interior in order to enable the Government to acquire 200 acres of privately owned land on the shores of three small but beautiful lakes in exchange for 160 acres which have heretofore been, and are now, used for a hotel and fish hatchery under concession from the National Park Service. It will be observed that both the lands sought to be acquired and the lands proposed to be conveyed are within the exterior limits of the park and that consequently no additional expense of administration is involved.

The letter of the Secretary of the Interior, submitting draft of the bill and requesting its passage is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 23, 1925.

HON. N. J. SINNOTT,
*Chairman Committee on the Public Lands,
House of Representatives.*

MY DEAR MR. SINNOTT: I have the honor to submit herewith for your consideration and introduction draft of a proposed bill authorizing the exchange of certain patented lands in the Rocky Mountain National Park, Colo., for Government lands in another part of the park.

The facts which induce this recommendation are briefly as follows: In 1908 one Abner E. Sprague secured a permit to build a summer cottage in section 7, township 4 north, range 73 west, of the sixth principal meridian in the then

Colorado National Forest. In 1913 Sprague applied for and received a concession from the Forest Service to conduct a place of entertainment for people who wished to visit the region, together with the right to occupy 60 acres of land on which to construct ponds for the propagation of fish to serve to guests. Two ponds were constructed at a cost of about \$1,500 and stocked with trout. This concession was for five years, at a rental of \$35 per annum, subject to change upon renewal. On January 26, 1915, the tracts of land occupied by Sprague were included in the Rocky Mountain National Park, and Sprague's occupancy has since continued under permits granted by the National Park Service. Sprague owns or controls 200 acres in the Loch Vale region of the park; 80 acres of which includes the lake at the entrance to Loch Vale; and 120 acres including Lake Mills, at the entrance to Glacier Gorge.

If this property should be exploited for private gain, it would greatly interfere with the enjoyment of visitors to this beautiful region—the wildest, and one of the most interesting parts of the park. To avoid the building of summer homes, or shacks, and the setting up of private enterprises around these beautiful lakes, it is desirable that the Government secure the control of this private land. So far as can be now foreseen, the Government property in the park proposed to be exchanged will continue to be used for hotel purposes, and there is no reason to anticipate that the service to the public would be affected by private ownership. The chief value of this land lies in the improvements upon it, while, from the park standpoint, each of the lakes on the lands to be secured by the Government in this exchange is as important as any single scenic feature of the park. In view of the above, and the further reason that the Government will receive 200 acres of privately owned land in the park in exchange for only 160 acres, it is believed that the exchange would be most advantageous to the Government from every standpoint. The owner of the private land involved is agreeable to the exchange proposed.

By letter of even date I have also forwarded a similar communication and recommendation to the chairman Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, United States Senate.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK, *Secretary.*